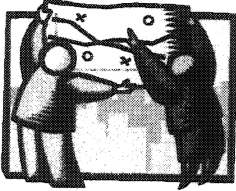


Chapter 5: Physical Activity



This chapter “walks” you through factors and examples your coalition can use for increasing physical activity opportunities.

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Chapter 5 *Physical Activity*

Module 1: Physical Activity for Healthy Kids

Step Up and Step Out for physical activity!

Not too many years ago, people used the phrase “a hop, skip, and a jump away” to refer to something a short distance away. Now, not only is the phrase used infrequently, but we rarely hop, skip, and jump at all.

Between the ages of two and seventeen, children in the U.S. spend (on an average) the equivalent of three years of their waking lives watching TV – approximately 15,000 to 18,000 hours, as compared to 12,000 hours in school. (1)



Changes in physical activity levels

People are generally more aware of the need to increase activity, but things like TV, video games, and the computer are top competitors for our time and attention. Besides, it isn't always easy to change life in the fast lane!

Think about it....

- ♥ Our jobs are more automated than ever before!
- ♥ We drive everywhere...too often by the fast-food window!
- ♥ Many of us take the elevator instead of the stairs!
- ♥ Use of the microwave is more common than the oven, decreasing activity expended for meal preparation!
- ♥ We often use a switch to open a car window, instead of a crank!
- ♥ We use a remote rather than get off the sofa to change TV channels!
- ♥ We're upset if we can't park close to the entrance of the grocery store!
- ♥ We have the option of doing household business via the computer instead of expending the energy to venture outside!



Statistics help provide a good look at the reality of physical activity in lifestyles.

Statistics on adult activity

CDC reports (2):

- ♥ 60% of adults do not engage in levels of physical activity necessary to provide health benefits
- ♥ 25% are not active at all in their leisure time

Considering the role adults play in modeling physical activity behavior for children...these statistics certainly indicate an area for development!

Statistics on children's activity levels

CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (3) indicates:

- ♥ more than a third of young people aged 12-21 years do not regularly engage in vigorous activity
- ♥ participation in all types of physical activity declines strikingly as age or grade in school increases
- ♥ daily participation in high school physical education classes dropped from 42% in 1991 to 29% in 1999
- ♥ Only 19% of all high school students are physically active for 20 minutes or more in physical education classes every day during the school week

As a consequence, many children are not developing the skills and knowledge necessary for lifelong participation in physical activity. Unless lifestyle changes are made, many of our children may be facing inevitable health problems.



The benefits of activity

Why do health professionals rally to convince people of the need for healthy levels of physical activity?

First and foremost, regular physical activity each day or several times a week reduces the risk of developing or dying from some of the leading causes of illness and death in the United States. More specifically physical activity (4):

- ♥ Reduces the risk of dying from coronary heart disease and of developing high blood pressure, colon cancer, and diabetes
- ♥ Can help reduce blood pressure in some people with hypertension
- ♥ Helps maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints

- ♥ Reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression and fosters improvements in mood and feelings of well-being
- ♥ Helps control weight, develop lean muscle and reduce body fat

Benefits for youth

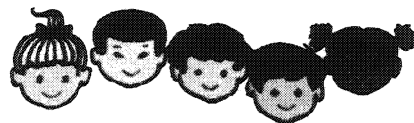
Of particular importance is that good levels of physical activity tend to make youth (5)

- ♥ Feel good
- ♥ Have the ability to function optimally
- ♥ Have the ability to perform challenging tasks

These all add up to the potential for children to do better in school!

In addition, physically active lifestyles in younger populations may create health benefits throughout the life cycle (2):

- ♥ **Peak bone mass:** Weight-bearing physical activity is essential for normal skeletal development during childhood and adolescence for achieving and maintaining peak bone mass in young adults
- ♥ **Social support:** Social support from family and friends has been consistently and positively related to regular physical activity
- ♥ **Lifelong health-related habits:** Physical activity and eating patterns are often established in childhood.



Benefits for teens

Research indicates that students who participate in interscholastic sports (3):

- ♥ Have greater self-confidence
- ♥ Are less likely to be regular and heavy smokers

Build acceptance for physical activity

Are you ready to determine your game plan for increasing physical activity?

1. Begin planning your strategies by recognizing some people have negative reactions to the word exercise. To increase acceptance of the coalition's ideas to incorporate more physical activity:
 - ♥ Avoid using the word exercise!
 - ♥ Use the term "physical activity" and find activities that are fun!
 - ♥ Show kids how fun it can be so they will want to do it the rest of their lives.
2. Recognize the definitions for physical activity and associated words (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 1996, 1999):
 - ♥ **Physical activity:** Any bodily movement you do with skeletal muscles that expends energy.
 - ♥ **Exercise:** Activity that is structured and tends to have fitness as its goal. "Exercise" is very often perceived as more of "must do" than a "want to do!" Exercise isn't necessary for health benefits but activity is!
 - ♥ **Physical fitness:** A level of health you acquire by being physically active.
 - ♥ **Workout:** Often used to refer to exercise.
A "workout" to stay fit sounds more like work rather than fun!
3. Recognize the ultimate goal...improved health...can be achieved with simple changes.

A person doesn't need to "exercise" (are you "caught" or have you thrown away the word "exercise" yet?) endlessly to receive health benefits! The little activities add up. Only three 10-minute sessions a day of everyday activities like gardening, vacuuming, climbing stairs, and walking to school will help strengthen heart, tone muscles, and maintain a healthy weight.

A person doesn't have to be a "fitness fanatic!" Activity, rather than fitness is the focus. Fitness levels vary with individual differences such as genetics and age. Research does not show that fitness levels of youth have decreased (partly because fitness levels weren't measured years ago), but body composition has. Today's youngsters are slightly fatter than they were 20 years ago. Studies suggest that a low physical activity level is a primary factor contributing to excessive fat accumulation. (6, 7)

4. Along with health benefits, recognize the potential for improved learning in schools!

There is a move away from structured fitness programs and towards movement education. Movement education offers the opportunity to focus on the individual child and has enhanced the use of creative instructional methods in schools. (6) Movement education provides a balanced physical education program that teaches skills and concepts. These are important in the development of self-confidence necessary to feel comfortable participating in physical activities.

Now that you've had a little warm-up, it is time to begin thinking about creating awareness of physical activity.



Increase community awareness

Bonnie Pruden is considered the first lady of fitness. She gained national fame in 1955 when she wrote the SHAPE of the nation address. Her work with Dr. Hans Kraus promoted Dwight Eisenhower to form what is known today as the President's Council on Fitness and Sports (8). It was one of the first steps towards creating a national awareness of a trend...a decrease in children's activity.

Awareness needs to occur at the community level as well so that people will be motivated to create environmental change. The tools and methods that can be used to make a difference include:

1. **Communicating research findings from recognized experts, i.e., Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Surgeon General, and National Association for Sports and Physical Education (NASPE)**

Example:



"Schools and community programs that promote regular physical activity among young people could be among the most effective strategies for reducing the public health burden of chronic diseases associated with sedentary lifestyles." ...CDC (9)

2. Convincing key money holders to create change by comparing the cost of new programs and activities with potential healthcare savings

Example:



Money spent by a business to create walking paths on the grounds, or contract with a gym for use of facilities as an employee benefit, is likely to be returned in increased employee motivation, decreased absences, and decreased health care costs.

3. Finding opportunities to demonstrate and promote physical activity

Examples:



Example a: Plan for physical activity at school assemblies if none exist. School assemblies could include “activity moving” songs, games, or school cheers.

Example b: Suggest youth organizations plan physical activity for every meeting, if it isn’t a common practice.

4. Problem-solving the factors that keep people from participating in physical activity and then make people aware of the solutions

Example:



Example a: Participation in recreation department dance classes was limited by facility space in one community. The recreation department reached an agreement with the middle school to hold the classes in the commons area. This action significantly increased the class size!

Example b: Swim classes were scheduled at the same time as a very popular library story hour, affecting participation in each program. A simple time change avoided a conflict and increased participation in reading and activity!

5. Identifying and taking advantage of existing community interests and opportunities

Example:



Example a: One community identified the popularity of in-line skating and took steps to create a safe “path” for all to use.

Example b: Another community might develop an interest in “sidewalk games” and find a safe place in the community to draw, hopscotch, or play other games.

6. Creating social opportunities for physical activity to increase participation

Example:



Many people participate in group events for the social opportunity. Organizing a “walking club” may get more people involved than just trying to convince people to walk alone. The opportunity to “visit” while they walk may be a motivating factor!

7. Creating opportunities for small successes that build to more successes

Example:



Children at one school chose a destination on a map they wished to make as a walking goal each year. Small success towards the goal was celebrated each week when they plotted how far on the map they had walked toward their goal that week!

8. Sharing personal experiences and modeling appropriate behaviors

Example:

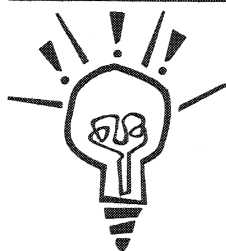


Parents can model physical activity in a number of different ways. One way is to take a family walk after a Sunday or holiday meal!



References and Resources

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- (8) Sports Illustrated, Vol. 90. No. 23, page 12. June 7, 1999.
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Module Tip:

Get on the bandwagon with CDC to make physical activity everywhere you go!

FAQs:

- ❑ **Question:** How long does a person need to be active to see increased fitness benefits?
- ❑ **Answer:** Health experts state that any sustained movement has fitness benefits. The 1996 Surgeon General's Report states that men and women of all ages benefit from a moderate amount of daily physical activity. The moderate amount of activity can be obtained in longer sessions of moderately intense activities (such as 30 minutes of brisk walking) or in shorter sessions of more strenuous activities (such as 15-20 minutes of jogging). It is suggested that adults include 20 minutes 3 times per week of vigorous intensity activity, and 30 minutes 5 times per week of any intensity.
- ❑ **Question:** Help! Because of my job, family, and other commitments, I just don't have time for physical activity.
Answer: Physical activity is a fun way to spend time with your family and build healthy relationships! It can also reduce stress, making it easier for you to cope with job demands! Find small periods of time throughout the day, or schedule a "health break" at the same time each day until it becomes a habit!

Module Glossary:

Exercise: Activity that is structured and tends to have fitness as its goal.

Noncompetitive physical activity: Participation in the activity isn't dependent on "winning a spot" based on a skill level in comparison with others.

Physical activity: Any bodily movement you do using skeletal muscle that expends energy.

Physical fitness: A level of health you acquire by being physically active.

Workout: Often used to refer to exercise.



Brainstorming Physical Activity Awareness

1. List awareness creating activities your community can use for physical activity. Remember to plan something for each community group (children, teens, parents, senior citizens, business, and others).
2. Include these activities in an action plan.

Children: *Example: A physical activity tip from the principal on the intercom each morning*

Teens: *Example: A survey to determine interests*

Parents: *Example: Physical activity suggestions in a parent newsletter*

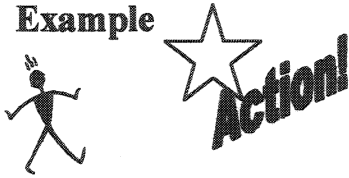
Senior Citizens: *Example: Post suggestions on the senior center bulletin board about how people can model physical activity for grandchildren*

Objective: To increase the awareness of the benefits of physical activity in the community, for families with children by 1/02/06.

Environmental change methods planned. Check all that apply.	Actions and resources needed to implement the plan	Problems to resolve	Who takes action, and by what date?	Review—results of actions Check all that apply.
<input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaboration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Repetition <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reward -Or-	<p>Action: Plan an event with retailers at the "mall" by December '05</p> <p>Marketing Plan: Telephone a personal contacts to retailers and mall representatives</p> <p>Resources: Stamps, stationary</p> <p>Action: Plan activities by 8/05</p> <p>Marketing Plan: not needed</p> <p>Resources: fish bowl supplies</p> <p>Action: Find volunteers to staff activities</p> <p>Marketing Plan: Mall announcements, TV/ radio announcements</p> <p>Resources: Volunteer to write announcements and make contacts to implement them</p>		Susan makes contacts by 2/05	<p>Communication:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Great marketing <input type="checkbox"/> Need M-and-M's <p>Time:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Good timing <input type="checkbox"/> Needs work <p>Location:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Needs work <p>Resources:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Feasible cost <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Needs work <p>Participation:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Needs work <p>Overall:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Great-continue <input type="checkbox"/> Good-revise <input type="checkbox"/> Fair-revise

Comments:

Example



Event Planning Tool

Use this example to create awareness and participation!

Title Of Program/Project/Event: "Fish Bowl Trivia in the Mall"

☒ Media ☐ School ☒ Business ☒ Community

Target Audience: (check all planned for your activity)

☐ Students ☐ Parents ☐ Teachers ☐ School meal director and staff ☐
☐ School administrators ☒ Business/community leaders/community-at-large 3850

Outline/Description/Objectives/Ideas:

Objective: To increase awareness of activity choices.

Description:

1. Create questions about activity (these can vary according to your audience). Type the questions on a page so that they can be cut into strips that will be placed in a fish bowl. Questions can include the number of minutes of activity recommended each day for good health, safe stretching techniques, etc.
2. Have participants draw questions from the bowl, and then ask them to answer the question correctly.
3. Give participants who answer the question correctly, a small prize.
4. Give all participants tip sheets of activity suggestions.
5. Have mall merchants promote the event with placards at the register and a special discount when a tip sheet is shown.
6. **Optional:** demonstrate activities.

Marketing Plan: Announce in newspaper and on radio

Resource Materials/Supplies/Food/Handouts:

Fish bowl, questions

Costs/Funding Source:

Printing

Manpower Needed:

1-2

Space/Time/Date Requirements:

1 table

Prep Time:

1-2 hours

Alternate Plan:

Comments:

Also a good activity for coaches when "sports" related questions are used. Can also be used with healthy eating suggestions.